

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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UNCLAS ATHENS 2772

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENCE DAY 1977

1. UNDER THE WARM, SUNNY SKIES OF AN EARLY SPRING, INDEPENDENCE DAY (MARCH 25) WAS CELEBRATED THROUGHOUT GREECE IN ITS TRADITIONAL MANNER -- WITH PARADES, RELIGIOUS SERVICES, SPEECHES AND FEASTING. ATTENTION FOCUSED ON ATHENS, OF COURSE, WHERE PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WAS JOINED BY PRESIDENT TSATSOS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT FIGURES IN CALLING FOR THE UNITY OF THE GREEK PEOPLE AND FOR DETERMINATION IN DEFENDING THE NATIONAL INTEREST. IN SPITE OF THE CURRENT UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS WITH TURKEY AND THE WEEK-LONG TURKISH MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN WHICH COINCIDED WITH THE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, THE GOG DID NOT INDULGE IN ANY SABER-RATTLING, PREFERRING INSTEAD TO EMPHASIZE PATRIOTISM.

2. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE GREEKS, NOTED THE NEED TO PROFIT FROM THE LESSONS OF THE PAST AND TO APPLY THEM TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE. HE POINTED OUT THAT PARTIOTISM "MUST MAKE US THINK OF WHAT WE CAN OFFER TO THE

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NATION." AND CONCLUDED THAT NO ONE WOULD DARE "OFFEND THE HONOR AND THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY SINCE ANY POTENTIAL OFFENDER WOULD KNOW THAT WE STAND READY AND UNITED TO DEFEND OURSELVES." PRESIDENT TSATSOS SAID THE GREEK PEOPLE HAD ESTABLISHED THEIR NEW STATE IN 1822 "INSPIRED BY THE EXAMPLE SET BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND BY FRANCE..." THE NATION HAD PERSEVERED, HE CONTINUED, THROUGH THE RESOLVE OF THE GREEK PEOPLE TO OVERCOME

ADVERSITY.

3. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF'S ORDER OF THE DAY TO THE ARMED FORCES ENDED WITH THE EXHORTATION "WE TODAY MUST ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST ANY ENEMY, AND I CAN SAY THIS TO YOU: WE ARE PREPARED\*" HE WAS SECONDED BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DAVOS WHO REITERATED THE MILITARY IS "READY" SHOULD IT BE CALLED UPON TO DEFEND THE NATION. OTHER CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ECHOED THESE GENERAL THEMES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE PRONOUNCEMENTS. THE EVENT WAS MARKED BY IMPRESSIVE MILITARY PARADES (DURING WHICH THE ARMED FORCES APPEARED TO BE GREETED WITH NOTICEABLY GREATER WARMTH THAN IN THE PAST TWO YEARS) AND TE DEUMS IN THE CO-CAPITALS OF ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI AND BY CEREMONIES ON A LESSER SCALE IN CITIES AND VILLAGES ACROSS THE LAND.

4. IF THE GOG SPOKESMEM DEMONSTRATED RESTRAINT, HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION, EXCEPT FOR UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC) LEADER MAVROS WHO SPOKE IN BROAD TERMS OF GREECE'S GLORIOUS HISTORY AND THE NEED FOR FUTURE SACRIFICE IN DEFENDING "FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE," WAS MORE DIRECT IN LINKING THE OCCASION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH THE TURKISH THREAT. ILIAS ILIOU (PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT - EDA) SAID THAT GREECE MUST RELY ON HER OWN STRENGTH AND UNITY AS WELL AS THE READINESS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO FACE THREATS TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST IN CYPRUS AND THE AEGEAN. THE DISSIDENT COMMUNIST PARTY (KKE-INTERIOR) COMMENTED THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF 1821 SERVED AS AN INSPIRATION IN FACING THE PROVOCATIONS OF "TURKISH CHAUVINISM IN CYPRUS AND THE AEGEAN, AND THE EFFORTS

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TO UNDERMINE THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME." THE MOSCOW-ORIENTED COMMUNIST PARTY (KKE-EXTERIOR) EXTOLLED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND BLAMED GREECE'S PRESENT TRIALS ON AMERICAN AND NATO IMPERIALISTS. FOR HIS PART, PASOK LEADER ANDREAS PAPANDREOU CHARGED THE TURKISH MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN WERE AN ADROITLY ESCALATED THREAT AGAINST GREEK SOVEREIGNTY "BY TURKEY AND OUR ALLIES," WITH AT LEAST THE TOLERANCE OF THE USSR. FURTHERMORE, PAPANDREOU REFUSED TO ATTEND THE OFFICIAL DOXOLOGY IN ATHENS, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE OF HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE POSITION ALLOTTED HIM BY THE GOG IN THE PROTOCOL LINE.

4. THE MEDIA GAVE BROAD COVERAGE TO THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS AND THE RELATED FESTIVITIES. PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE WAS MENTIONED WIDELY AMONG THE CONGRATULATIONS WHICH WERE RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN LEADERS.

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